

from what we have now. Get us to agree to swap this current awful life for some other realm of productivity, planning, regularity. Always other people to listen too. We must ask no questions and keep our heads down in this new freedom. Submit to freedom!

But we are not interested in economies of anything lest they be the sharing of the adventure of living, of making life extraordinary. Not the least because we are not ordinary. Or normal. Who could be? They pretend that we should not rebel and put ourselves in danger. They demand that we should wait, should not raise our voice to say 'no'. Well, in this we have no real choice for we live in dangerous conditions every-day, with or without defiance. As had probably been said before, if there's not the peril of dying from hunger, there's the danger of dying of boredom. Happily, it seems that this historical mode of revolution is passing away and we ourselves have moved on. We no longer oppose as in a mirror image. We remove ourselves from the equation of opposition. We rebel on the ground of our choice. We resist as we see fit. We revolt against any and all who attempt anything less than freedom.

*Today, we revolt as bodies occupied in love and anger, as bodies in occupations of refusal.*

*We refuse any longer to be a working body.*

*We refuse any longer to be a family body.*

*We refuse any longer to be a disciplined body.*

*We refuse any longer to be a hidden body.*

*We are bodies occupied in rebellion, occupying life with joy.*

*Once more, never-ending, infinite, revolutionary bodies. Always...*

Written Under The Influence of An Occupation

*'What goes on between the bodies in an occupation is more interesting than the occupation itself' (How To?, 2001)*

Summer into Autumn 2007

# BLOCKAGE



# Occupied Joy

# NOW WE HAVE TO BEGIN

*There is the head.*

*But, more so, there is the heart.*

*Then there is the body that we physically inhabit, that we possess (or possess us?), that we feel through, that contains the brain and the heart and the lifeblood.*

*And there are our senses. We are sensual because the world is sensuous.*

*The world is tactile. To live, to be alive is tangible, is a possibility, is something that is always open to risk and rebellion.*

But we sense that something is wrong. That something feels wrong. What has become of this sensuous world that moves towards domination by the tasteless, the touchless, the sterile and the unappealing? This much seems obvious wrong.

If we look through the other end of the telescope however we can see that this unappealing world is not us, only that we are the world. But what has become of us? What are we becoming? How do we make the world continuously sensual?

*'I am. We are. That is enough. Now we have to begin. Life has been put in our hands. For itself it became empty already long ago. It pitches senselessly back and forth, but we stand firm, and so we want to be its initiative and we want to be its ends'*

Ernst Bloch, Objective in *'The Spirit of Utopia'*, (1918)

## TO ARMS, TO LEGS!

Despite the pitfalls of how photos can only represent any rebellion, we can still find ourselves connecting to an image of resistance. We sense that our own body can also be in the way of what was once (but is less so) called 'progress' as much as those bodies that we see in the picture. In this act of seeing the rebellion in others, in feeling it, in imagining it - all our bodies merge and began to harmonise - there is something finally in that pure physicality that is being put right again, with ourselves, all of us, our world.

And this is what is the basis of resistance - to physically put our body in the colonised space and to be a presence that denies the occupy-

Within the realm of these great ideas, some thinkers argue that, in itself, refusal is an empty gesture. But the simple 'No!', the simple physical shaking of the head is a process of disentanglement from the snare of dialogue and negotiation over the size of (y)our cage. The act of refusal is a step towards understanding the simplicity of where we stand - against the banalities and zombieification of capital - where the bottom line is your one single resonating 'No' that reaches far out, connects, and binds us together, physically, embodied as a blockage.

*'And I would also say: 'My mouth will be the mouth of those griefs which have no mouth, my voice, the freedom of those that collapse in the dungeon of despair...and above all beware, my body and my soul too, beware of crossing your arms in the sterile attitude of the spectator, because life is not a spectacle, because a sea of sorrows is not a proscenium because a man who screams is not a dancing bear'.*

Aime Cesaire, *Notebook of a Return to My Native Land* (1939)

A revolution is not pathological, by this we mean it is not a condition, an acting out or a delusion. It is not just a reaction to their reaction. It is something entirely other. It is the feeling that we know what we can do to take us into the unknown. This feeling pushes us towards taking action. Action then means activity, means physicality - means the movement of arms, fingers, feet, backs. Not the endless reading of books, as if this dreaming in words would be enough, as if a fantasy of the perfect correctly theorised revolution would in anyway cause one muscle to move. As was said five hundred years back *'when I ask friend to tell me what he knows of something, he wants to show me a book: he would not venture to tell me that he has scabs on his arse without studying his dictionary to find out the meanings of 'scab' and 'arse'* (Montaigne). Words may move us or make bonds between us but they are nothing without activity.

In the same way, a revolution cannot be programmed. Cannot be set out in a master plan, a timetable or a calculation. To some it seems foolhardy to proclaim an adventurous body that takes physical risks in the here and now against the brutalities that await us at every corner of this disciplining society. They will say that opposition must be organised and planned out at the level of pure brainwork, whereby ideology is substituted for emotion. They want to lead what they see as a mass of bodies that does not think nor feel but merely acts to the sound of words like pets. They only want to lead us into a new economy anyway. Something no different

politics. It goes without saying that we have zero interest in upholding regimes.

## TO THE TWO-LETTER WORD, 'NO!'

Integral to the body is the capability to extend our physicality through the voice. And this is a voice that speaks the bodies refusal to work, war, humiliation, numbed living death, each time it whispers or shouts 'NO!'.

*'I have said 'No' to oppression several times in my life and I have always experienced the same sensation of agonising fears and doubts. I feel foolish, childish even...why disturb the currents?...What I most remembered in these past incidents was that unpleasant cold foreboding that always preceded my every 'No' to oppression, but it was always a sign that I would not hold back this voice of protest.'*

Ngugi Wa Thiong'o, from *'Refusing To Die'* (1981)

And so, sometimes this vocalisation can be wrongfooted for when we say 'No!' for the master, we refuse ourselves. Think of the wretched of the earth, the twisted body of the colonised, the twisted mindset of the colonised that speaks with the voice of the master. That's some disorientation. For all of us, the process of de-colonisation is a shock to the system. We not only talk the language of the master, we often walk the way of the master, enjoying its benefits as crumbs from a table. But what would it be like to be fully embodied in ourselves? Could it be the final shaking off of our hunching over, our making ourselves smaller, our loss of intimacy, our broken body language? Could it be feeling our actual presence in situations, in self-created moments, in events, in passionate times of common refusal. Could it be that we no longer 'feel foolish' saying 'NO!'.

Often refusal begins with anger but soon turns to laughter at the masters. What could clear the colonised mind quicker than seeing through the invested authority of any boss, any type of cop, any liberal armed with mediating techniques? Or, any comrade who only 'knows' what we should do! When authority is seen through, there's not really much further to go.

*'Decolonisation refers to breaking with the ways our reality is defined and shaped by the dominant culture and asserting our own understanding of that reality, of our own experience'.*

bell hooks, *Sisters Of The Yam: Black Women and Self-Recovery* (1993)

ing force. We take up occupation in the enemy's space. We occupy and maintain free space for as long as we can. We don't hold onto untenable positions, it being better to disappear and then re-appear in cracks, along faultlines, in contradictory positions to the space that capital tries to hold with an increasingly desperate straight face. Or else we pop up in their supposedly sacred and secure space, their heartlands, their midst, the controlled zones, wrecking havoc where all appears to be normal.

You set one foot into their occupation of our once common space. I am one foot behind you. We occupy, we place our bodies there. We are there. We challenge. We are ready once more to know freedom. Rebellion in this sense is analogous to and as sensual then as patting the dirty earth tightly around a newly planted seed. To get one's hands dirty is always the physical moment of theory and practice because to get your hands dirty is to get your mind dirty too. This is occupied joy for as we wait for fruit or flowers, the waiting is a physical act. We are waiting but something is always happening in every moment so we are not biding our time. Nothing is wasted in our efforts. We are occupied in rebellion. Acting, waiting, acting, waiting, gaining.

This collective rebellion is not always so easy to grasp though. It is not always possible for every individual to feel so present or engaged at this level. There is always a battle with the survival mechanism that seeks safety, that seeks logical self-protection. But with many bodies we create self-defensive bodies of refusal. None of us could go through this alone, as if we must single-handedly receive the blows of a truncheon, must take on the greatest beasts alone. We risk our collective body knowing that we can make changes happen despite the risks to individual bodies. But we work and oppose as a great body, we are not alone. We flow as a body of ants, of termites, of snakes, of wolves... of rats? Whatever we decide will work for us.

*'- This is the revolution, I said, just like this, living in the constant discovery of everything, in the nothingness of everything.*

*- Me, I don't like politics*

*- And me. I'm not talking about politics. I'm talking about revolution.*

*- But revolution is politics, Isn't revolution politics?*

*- ...It is the thing that is always constantly beginning. Like love, like death, like you'.*

Elias Khoury, *'The Little Mountain'* (1989)

Understanding this position from within a body is not always so easy. The two emotions - love and rage - that encompass our defence and our attack - are not always so easy to believe, to feel, to know. But these are the emotions of our resistance. Without love, there is only ideology. Without rage, there is only the ritual of politics (as it has come to be 'done' - automatically, programmed, unlistening). Love and anger are instincts that we come to trust because they come not from the machinic muscle of the brain but the soulful mystery of the heart, from the pangs of desire and nausea of the trustworthy mighty gut.

Anything else may be suspected or be unreliable - history, memory, reason, logic, truth, words...

*'It is the body and all the desires it produces that we wish to liberate from 'foreign' domination. It is 'on the ground' that we wish to 'work' for the liberation of society. There is no boundary between the two elements. I oppress myself inasmuch as that I is the product of a system of oppression that extends to all aspects of living...The 'revolutionary consciousness' is a mystification if it is not situated within a 'revolutionary body', that is to say, within a body that produces its own liberation'.*

Felix Guattari *'In Order To End The Massacre Of The Body'* (1973)

How do we discover the resistant body? What do we know of the crushed body? What can we know and learn about the body in history that then causes us to move now?

*The history and use of Toyi Toyi, the battle of Seghino at ValSusa, the Asociación Madres de Plaza de Mayo, Greenham, Saltley Gates, Woomera, the Anarchists Against The Wall, the Internationals at Fallujah...?*

*Or the events at Diaz School, at Bonne-Nouvelle, of Hans Kok, Headwaters, Bradley Will, on Aubonne Bridge, Biko, Saro-Wiwa....?*

What do know about these? We might have heard, have read about these things to know them but what do you feel about these? Do you 'feel' these? The uplifting, the spirit, the dream made real but also the terrorism, the baton, the killings...

Yes, we feel them as we occupy zones of refusal - in a word, a dance, a laugh, tears, a space, a dream - against great odds.

*'In these dark times, will there be singing? Yes there will also be singing about these dark times'*

Bertolt Brecht (1938)

Without the self-trust and understanding of what a body can do, we risk a rupture when we fight hand to hand, brain to brain. And trust is more important than having the numbers. Or the manifesto. Trust pushes us into the unknown whereby we can place our precious precarious body into a fight. It is not something we can know without experience. It can be intuited but it must be lived through to be known at the level of our body, our bodies. And so, the body that flips a cop and breaks their line - the body that climbs through a window and occupies an empty building - the body that finally refuses where previously they had been polite, been accustomed to not speaking up, to holding their tongue 'for the best' - the body that sees through the fiction that activity might be 'illegal' and acts accordingly to take freedom - it is in these acts of resistance, that we trust our bodies to go beyond the norms of our conditioning to keep a low profile, to keep our heads below the parapet. What we find is the physical denial of our fear of doing wrong and of punishment. We work towards trusting ourselves to act despite our fear of repression, a pertinent fear of being broken, of being locked up, of being isolated (once more). More importantly then, we work towards a collective body more able to survive these repressions.

But, amongst ourselves, we build trust because bodies often collide. They make noises. They bristle but they also surrender. Communication needs a criticism that's spoken from the heart, is passionate, is alive, is full of love. This is always a moment of trust. The time where we embrace the speed and ecstasy of making our lives liveable once more. Neither sober, nor drunk. Revolution is a mania. It is not 'Politics', an activity that is carried out as a burden rather than a joy. Revolution is not the companion to the regime of this 'Politics'. No, revolution is passion. It is energy. It is blood that moves around inside, blood that compels us to act for this blood is the warmth of our humanity.

It is love. Not useless love or futile love but a love that *'...must be something that somehow constructs communities of knowledge and desire, that becomes constructive of something else.'* (Toni Negri, in *'Back To The Future'*, 1998). A love that is the foundation of our solidarity.

And so, if politics is merely a regime then rebellion minus love equals